DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 704 EA 001 336

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The Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency in Iowa. Part III, Summary Report.

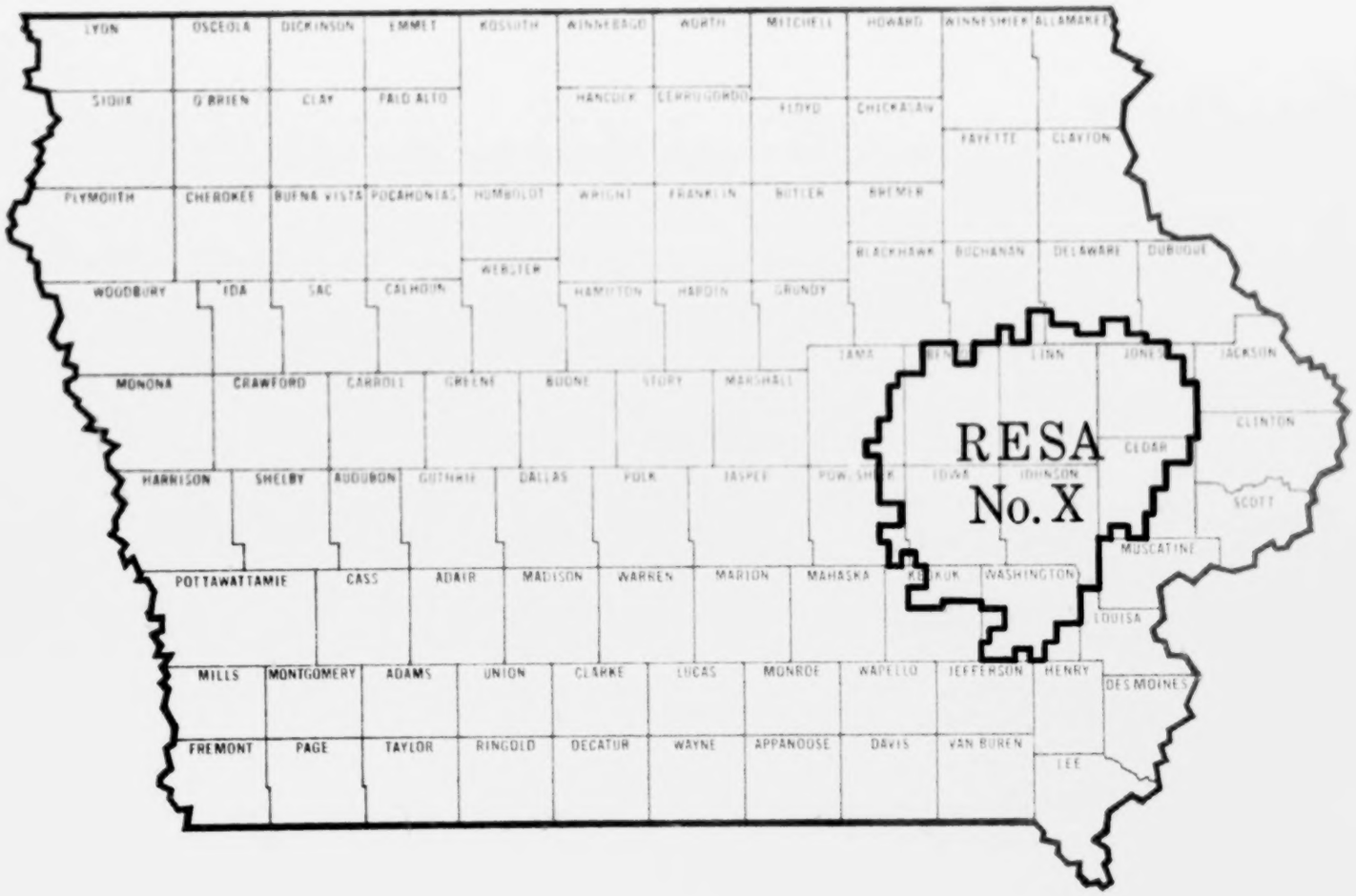
Iowa Univ., Iowa City. Iowa Center for Research in School Administration.; Linn County Board of Education, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
Spons Agency-Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education.
Report No-DPSC-66-980; ESEA-Title-3
Pub Date Sep 67
Grant-OEG-3-6-000980-1701
Note-45p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.35
Descriptors-Advisory Committees, *County School Systems, Educational Benefits, Educational Needs, Educational Planning, Financial Support, *Interagency Cooperation, *Intermediate Administrative Units, *Regional Programs, *School Redistricting, State Departments of Education, State Legislation

Major aspects of the project are reviewed in four chapters: (1) An introductory review of the study's background; (2) the major needs of public elementary and secondary education in Iowa and the need for a new type of educational service agency; (3) major recommendations of the study, discussed under 10 categories; and (4) major benefits resulting from the establishment of a network of multicounty regional educational service agencies in the State of Iowa. Documents EA 001 332 through 001 336 report the findings of a single study funded under Title III of ESEA. (JK)

ED026704

THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY IN IOWA

Part III Summary Report



EA 001 336

Prepared by

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College of Education, The University of Iowa

For the

Linn County Board of Education, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY IN IOWA

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September, 1967

The research herein was conducted under Grant No. OEG-3-6-000980-1701, Innovative Centers Branch Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contributions of many people were significant in the completion of this study.

Special commendation is given to Superintendent Ira E. Larson and the staff of the Linn County Schools for their invaluable assistance throughout the study.

The county superintendents and local school district superintendents of the seven county school systems included in the in-depth study provided valuable information and advice on various aspects of the study.

Gratitude is expressed to the county superintendents in the state who generously offered their time in the completion of several survey instruments. Special recognition is given to the superintendents and staffs of the service units in Iowa and other states who made it possible for the project staff and State Advisory Committee to gain firsthand impressions of their programs and services.

Appreciation is extended to members of the State Advisory Committee who gave freely of their time and energy in assisting with the design of the study, offering reactions to various phases of the study, and providing advice and counsel to the project staff. Special commendation is also given to Perry H. Grier, Ira E. Larson, and Louis L. Pickett who served in the capacity of reactors to some of the final chapters of the report. Dwight G. Bode, who served as an *ex officio* member of the State Advisory Committee and as a reactor, also deserves special recognition.

Members of the Staff of the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction also provided valuable assistance throughout the year-long study.

Special acknowledgment is offered to Dr. Franklin D. Stone, Project Liaison, and other staff members of the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration; Dr. E. Gordon Richardson; and Fellows of the Program for Administrators of Educational Research and Information Systems.

The contributions of several research associates who contributed to various aspects of the study were invaluable in the successful completion of the study. Those deserving special thanks are: Edward F. Hanlon, Patricia Kelley, Joseph B. Kurtzman, David Little, Richard Riley, Dr. Wayne P. Truesdell, Dr. Ted R. Urich, and Edwin Van Bruggen.

Invaluable editorial assistance was provided by Dr. Beatrice A. Furner and Kenneth J. McCaffrey. Appreciation is extended to Janet L. Cochran who served as secretary to the project staff throughout the study and in the preparation of the final manuscript and to Darlene Fisher, Judith Nepple, and Geraldine Sheridan for assistance in the preparation of the final manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

A great deal of interest has been expressed in recent years in Iowa in a restructuring of the county unit of school administration. Ninety-nine single-county school systems were established as recently as 1948 to provide programs and services to local school districts comprising the county school system. It has become increasingly clear, however, that the single-county unit cannot adequately perform the service role needed by public education in the state.

To the distinct credit of the county school superintendents of Iowa, it has been their professional organization that has been quickest to point out that in most situations, the single-county school systems, as structured in the past, cannot completely adapt to needed changing service roles. The Iowa Association of County Superintendents has given impetus to the recognition of the potentials inherent in multi-county, intermediate units serving a larger geographic area, with larger student enrollments and financial bases. Illustrative of this attitude is the fact that during the past several years an increasing number of voluntary arrangements between county school systems have developed. These currently include the many situations in which a single administrator serves two or more counties, and the large number of multi-county special education arrangements.

In the 1966-67 school year, only forty-six of the original ninety-nine county school systems continued to employ a superintendent. The remaining fifty-three county units, served by twenty-three superintendents, are engaged in multi-county agreements. The majority of these involve a single administrator serving two county school systems, although one of the superintendents served four counties.

Also during the 1966-67 school year, sixty counties were involved in some form of multi-county agreement for the purpose of providing programs in special education. The majority were two or three multi-county agreements, although six involved four counties and one was a joint five-county special education program.

In addition to their role in these activities, the Iowa Association of County Superintendents endorsed and supported one of two state-wide studies conducted in Iowa since 1960 relating to the restructuring of the county unit of school administration.

As further evidence of the need for and interest in the restructuring of the county unit of school administration, the Sixty-First Iowa General Assembly in 1965 enacted several statutes related to the regional educational service concept. Two of the most significant were Senate File 550 and House File 553. Senate File 550 permitted the creation of a maximum of twenty area community college or area vocational-technical districts in the state. House File 553 enacted permissive legislation allowing two or more contiguous counties to merge by joint resolution of the county boards of education, or by petition. The bill made the multi-county, regional educational service agency possible for Iowa. In the summer of 1966, the State Board of Public Instruction adopted a policy that mergers of county school systems approved under the provisions of House File 553 must fall within the same basic geographic boundaries established for area community college or area vocational-technical districts organized under Senate File 550.

Subsequent to the action of the Sixty-First Iowa General Assembly, personnel of the Boone County Board of Education, in November, 1965, expressed an interest in applying for a planning grant under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to study the feasibility of multi-county instructional media resource centers in Iowa. Response to this suggestion was immediate and enthusiastic with many counties expressing an interest in a broader study of the total programs and services which might be offered by multi-county, intermediate units.

After discussion with groups and individuals representing the Iowa Association of County Superintendents, the State Department of Public Instruction, and the four graduate schools of education in the state, the Linn County Superintendent of Schools and the then President of the Iowa Association of County Superintendents submitted an application in the name of the Linn County Board of Education in February, 1966, to conduct this study to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Division of Plans and Supplementary Centers. In June, 1966, a one-year planning grant was approved and funded in the amount of $97,000.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study has several major purposes. The six objectives of the planning grant, as stated in the original application, appear below:

1. Determine the appropriate relationship between the multi-county intermediate unit and the local school districts; and the relationship between the intermediate unit and the State Department of Public Instruction.

2. Determine appropriate functions and services of multi-county intermediate unit under legislation comparable to House File 553.

3. Determine the organizational structure best suited to carry out the functions and services as determined by the proposed study to be appropriate to the multi-county intermediate unit.

4. Determine staffing requirements for providing services and performing functions as previously assigned to the intermediate unit.

5. Determine the necessary space, materials, and equipment required to carry out those functions and services.

6. Formulate and disseminate recommendations resulting from the study, under the planning grant, to local, county, state, and national educational groups, and to appropriate *key* members of the lay public.

In addition, several minor purposes of the study were enumerated in the application. They were stated in question form, as follows:

1. What is the correct working relationship between an intermediate unit and a local district, and between an intermediate unit and the State Department of Public Instruction, all under Iowa's new legislation pertaining to the area concept? (House File 553, Senate File 550.)

2. Is the existing permissive legislation adequate to promote effective intermediate districts, or are amendments and additional legislation necessary?

3. In what respects should the intermediate unit be an arm of the State Department of Public Instruction? What regulatory functions should be the area's responsibility?

4. What unique, innovative functions can be properly assigned to the intermediate unit?

5. What other functions and services should be a part of the intermediate unit's responsibility?

6. What organizational structure at the intermediate level will best serve to carry out the assigned functions and services?

7. What personnel will be required for the effective operation of a multi-county intermediate unit?

8. What are the job descriptions for staff members assigned major responsibilities?

9. Where should an intermediate office or offices be established?

10. What space requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?

11. What equipment requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?

12. What material requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?

13. How can the innovative ideas and exemplary programs recommended as a result of the study be best disseminated to the educators and general public of the state and nation?

14. How can we best gain widespread acceptance by educators and by the lay public of the area concept and of the recommended ideas and programs?

CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

Contract With the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration

Following receipt of the project approval, the Linn County Board of Education contracted with the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, College of Education, The University of Iowa, to complete the study. The contract was made with the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration on the recognition of the value of several supportive services which could be made available through the Center, including:

1. Availability of specialists in educational administration to conduct the study.

2. Availability of specialists in various disciplines for consultative purposes.

3. Availability of specialized libraries.

4. Availability of data information centers and computer services.

5. Facilities and equipment for the project staff.

6. Dissemination of the results of the study through established channels and procedures.

The Project Staff

The project staff included a director, assistant director, two half-time research associates, and a number of specialists from various disciplines who worked on certain aspects of the study. Included in the latter group were specialists from social work, law, public finance, political science, special education, educational media, guidance and counseling, data processing, and educational facilities.

State Advisory Committee

Assisting the staff in an advisory capacity was an eighteen-member State Advisory Committee. The membership was representative of nearly all levels of public education in the state, and some recognition in its make-up was also given to geographic areas of the state, and to school units of various sizes.

There were four local district school superintendents serving on the committee; five county school superintendents and one member of a county board of education; two representatives from an area vocational-technical district; four personnel from the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction; one representative from a public institution of higher education; and one member from the state legislature. In addition, the current presidents of the Iowa Association of County Superintendents and Iowa Audio-Visual Association served as *ex officio* members of the committee.

Members of the State Advisory Committee accompanied staff members on visitations to intermediate units located out of state. Four groups of approximately equal size were organized to secure firsthand observations of eleven units located in five different states.

Use of Consultants

Provision was made in the conduct of the study for consultation with authorities in various fields pertinent to the study. Included among these were personnel from the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association; the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction; and, institutions of higher education in Iowa and other states.

Visitations to Intermediate Units
Outside the State of Iowa

In planning the study it was felt to be of utmost importance to secure firsthand impressions and information concerning nationally recognized intermediate units. In an attempt to ascertain optimum units for visitation, the views of leaders in educational administration throughout the country were sought. Based on a consensus of their opinions, the following visitation schedule was developed.

Schedule of Visitations

Group A:

1. King County Schools - Seattle, Washington
2. Snohomish County Schools - Everett, Washington
3. Multnomah County Intermediate Education District - Portland, Oregon

Group B:

4. Wayne County Intermediate School District - Detroit, Michigan
5. Oakland County Intermediate School District - Pontiac, Michigan

Group C:

6. Alameda County Intermediate Unit - Hayward, California
7. Riverside County Intermediate Unit - Riverside, California
8. San Diego County - San Diego, California
9. Other Related Programs: Chabot College - Hayward, California

Group D:

10. Bucks County Schools - Doylestown, Pennsylvania
11. Allegheny County Schools - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In developing the schedule, consideration was given to geographic regions of the nation as well as outstanding operational features. The schedule included one community college with a strong vocational-technical program because of a recognized issue in Iowa concerning the governance of regional educational service agencies.

The director and assistant director of the study accompanied each of the four groups of State Advisory Committee members on the visitations.

Visitations to Intermediate Units
Within the State of Iowa

Several visitations to intermediate units within the State of Iowa were also made by the project staff.

Four criteria were used in the selection of visitation centers. These were:

1. Units "judged" to be outstanding.
2. Units "judged" to be typical or representative county school systems.
3. Units serving counties which are essentially urban or rural.
4. Units serving single or multiple counties.

Ten of the state's ninety-eight county school systems were visited along with one of Iowa's newly organized area vocational-technical schools. The latter was chosen for inclusion in the visitation schedule because of the issue in the state of the governance of regional educational service agencies, and because it currently administers some programs to elementary and secondary schools in its district.

Schedule of Visitations

1. Black Hawk County School System, Waterloo, Iowa
2. Delaware County School System, Manchester, Iowa
3. Henry County School System, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
4. Johnson County School System, Iowa City, Iowa
5. Linn County School System, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
6. Polk County School System, Des Moines, Iowa
7. Scott-Muscatine County School System, Davenport, Iowa
8. Washington County School System, Washington, Iowa
9. Webster County School System, Fort Dodge, Iowa
10. Winneshiek County School System, Decorah, Iowa
11. Other Related Programs: Area XV Vocational-Technical School, Ottumwa, Iowa

CHAPTER II

THE MAJOR NEEDS OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN IOWA AND THE NEED FOR A NEW TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

THE MAJOR NEEDS OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The major needs in the provision of elementary and secondary education in Iowa relate essentially to the limitations of many local school districts in the state (the assumption is made here that this unit of school administration will continue to be the central figure in the provision of educational programs). These limitations stem in large part from one or more of the following characteristics of many local school districts:

1. Inadequate enrollment size.
2. Deficiencies in educational programs.
3. Provision of professional personnel.
4. Inadequate financial resources.

Nearly all of the characteristics are interrelated and it should be recognized that it is frequently difficult to determine the cause-and-effect relationships of the four characteristics. In the discussion following, these interrelationships are to be recognized.

Inadequate Enrollment Size

There were a total of 501 local school districts in Iowa during the 1966-67 school year. Of this number, 455 operated a high school while the remaining forty-six were non-high school districts.

The number of high school districts in the 1966-67 school year presented in seven enrollment categories is shown below. There were 119 high school districts with a total enrollment in grades K-12 of less than 500 students. These districts accounted for approximately one-fourth of the 455 high school districts. Over three-fourths, or 80.6 per cent, had a total enrollment of less than 1,500 students. Only twenty-five high school districts, or 5.5 per cent, had enrollments exceeding 3,000 students.

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN IOWA BY ENROLLMENT CATEGORIES 1966-67*

Total Enrollment K-12	Number of Districts	Cumulative Number of Districts	Per Cent of Districts	Cumulative Per Cent of Districts
Less than 500	119		26.1	
500-749	120	239	26.4	52.5
750-999	71	310	15.6	68.1
1,000-1,499	57	367	12.5	80.6
1,500-1,999	30	397	6.6	87.2
2,000-2,999	33	430	7.3	94.5
3,000 or more	25	455	5.5	100.0
Total	455	455	100.0	100.0

*Source: *Data on Iowa Schools, 1967, op. cit.*, p.6.

During the 1966-67 school year six of the state's largest school districts, those enrolling 10,000 students or more, collectively enrolled 22.5 per cent of the total enrollment. Nineteen districts, each with a total enrollment over 5,000 students, enrolled 37.2 per cent of the total. One hundred forty-seven districts with 1,000 or more students each collectively enrolled 71.5 per cent of the total enrollment. The 119 smallest high school districts, those enrolling less than 500 students, and the forty-six operating non-high school districts enrolled 7.6 per cent of all the pupils enrolled in the public schools of the state.

The additional reorganization of local school districts and the creation of larger administration units will surely be beneficial, but this will still not create school districts of adequate size to provide many programs and services characterizing an optimal educational program.

Deficiencies in Educational Programs

One of the factors relating to size of enrollment is the comprehensiveness of course offerings, an important characteristic of educational programs. It has been repeatedly shown and is generally recognized that there is a direct relationship between the size of enrollment of high schools and the comprehensiveness of course offerings.

A second major deficiency of many educational programs of local school districts relates to matters of curriculum development. Many local school districts are unable because of lack of human or financial resources, to develop their own curriculum objectives, units of study, and educational materials, and thus rely heavily upon textbooks for the direction and implementation of educational programs.

A third major deficiency of the educational program of many elementary or secondary schools is the provision of special services. The complexity of modern society and the resulting demands being placed on education are well recognized. The present-day educational program is complex, requiring the services of a large number of specialists and supportive programs and services. Yet relatively few elementary or secondary schools provide, or are able to provide, adequate guidance programs, elementary and secondary curriculum consultant services, library services, special teachers for art and remedial reading, health services, supervisors, and other needed programs and services.

A final major deficiency of the education programs of many local school districts relates to the adequacy of programs and services for exceptional children. Not all of the exceptional children are provided the most suitable educational opportunities. Many of the special classes for exceptional children which are administered by local school districts or county school systems in Iowa are those for the educable mentally retarded. In addition, only a limited number of specialists in most areas of special education are employed by the school districts of the state. Little is being done for the emotionally disturbed child, the child with physical or other handicapping conditions, or the child with specific learning disabilities, to cite but a few examples.

Provision of Professional Personnel

No educational program can function effectively without the provision of a sufficient number of highly trained, competent professional personnel. Typically, consideration of the problems associated with professional personnel includes such concerns as the preparation of teachers, the recruitment and retention of teachers in view of the crucial perennial teacher shortage, teacher assignments, teacher salaries, and the in-service training of teachers.

A problem related to the size of enrollment of a school district and one which has a direct bearing on the quality of an educational program is that of the assignment of professional personnel to full-time teaching assignments in their major area of preparation. A number of studies have shown that the assignment of high school teachers to their major area of preparation is directly related to the size of the enrollment of the high school. Only the larger high schools are able to meet this objective.

Another aspect of the topic of professional personnel as it relates to possible shortcomings of local school districts is that of the professional development of personnel while in employment. Iowa school districts, for example, typically expend few resources for the continuous development or in-service training of their professional personnel.

The continuing development of staff personnel should be one of the most vital concerns of local school districts. This is so because of the key role played by the professional staff in a quality educational program. Further, the salaries of professional members typically constitute approximately three-fourths or more of the total expenditures of local school districts. The need to protect and develop this investment in human resources is critical.

However, a survey by the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration conducted in 1965 showed that the 138 responding school districts, which made up 30.1 per cent of the school districts in the state and enrolled 55.2 per cent of the total state enrollment, expended in direct in-service training in the 1964-65 school year an average of only $1.50 for each thousand dollars of total operating costs. This amounted to 71.4 cents per pupil annually, a pitifully small investment in manpower development.

Inadequate Financial Resources

The financial ability of a local school district is clearly related to the quality of the educational program of the district, the special services the district can provide its students, personnel factors, and the provision of physical facilities to house the educational program. Indeed, nearly all aspects of public elementary and secondary education are related to financial support.

The ability of local school districts to support many educational programs and services adequately has been severely restricted because of a preponderant dependence on the local property tax for the great majority of financial support.

In view of the concern of educators for securing adequate financial resources and the competition, not only within education, but generally for the tax dollar, the question of economy and best use of available resources is crucial. Recognition of the fact that over three-fourths of the local school districts in Iowa in the 1966-67 school year had fewer than 1,500 students, for example, raises serious questions concerning the economic and efficient functioning of these units in the provision of quality educational programs and services, many of which have been shown to require larger student populations.

LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The major limitations of the existing county unit of school administration to assist constituent local school districts in providing needed programs and services relate to (1) enrollment size, (2) professional personnel, and (3) existing programs and services.

As was true of the interrelationship between the major characteristics of local school districts which were considered, the interrelationships of the limitations as they apply to the county school system above are noted.

Enrollment Size

Only fourteen county school systems in 1966-67 had more than 9,000 students enrolled in the local public school districts comprising the county systems. The mean public school enrollment per county school system was 6,359.3 students. Over three-fourths of the units had enrollments of less than 6,000 students. Thus it can be seen that the great majority of Iowa county school systems fail to reach the 10,000 student-level category, the size recommended for local school districts in order to provide an adequate educational program.

Although there are other contributing reasons, one method utilized by county school systems to overcome the limitations of inadequate enrollment size has been the arrangements by two or more counties to jointly provide certain programs and services. This technique, although serving a useful function, is of limited value in that it does not permit the development of long-range planning by the county school systems or the constituent local school districts which receive services under such agreements.

Professional Personnel

A very serious limitation of many county school systems in their ability to provide needed programs and services to local school districts relates to the multi-faceted problem of securing professional personnel. This may be due to the apparent lack of professional prestige associated with all but a few of the county school systems in the state, the inability to justify offering certain specialized services due to limited enrollment, or it may be related to the shortage of personnel at the level of specialization required in these capacities. Whatever the cause or causes, the inability to secure and retain highly qualified professional personnel is a serious limitation for most of Iowa's existing county school systems.

Existing Programs and Services

Most Iowa county school systems do not presently offer extensive staff and student personnel services or administrative services to their constituent local school districts. The existing county units have the legal option, indeed the legal mandate in some areas, to provide extensive programs and services and many have the necessary financial resources available to accomplish this. Few county school systems have exercised their prerogatives in this regard, however. This situation may be caused by limited enrollment size, the lack of strong professional leadership in the county unit, the lack of professional personnel, or the unwillingness or limited vision of local school district personnel in utilizing the services of the county school system.

THE NEED FOR MULTI–COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

The foregoing observations suggest that substantial educational deficiencies exist in Iowa at the present time.

Some of these are attributable to the small enrollment size of the majority of local administrative units, making it impossible for these units to provide even basic programs and services. Thus, these districts must receive assistance in order to provide even a minimal educational program for their students. Efforts by these units, as presently structured, to increase the comprehensiveness of their programs even if this could be achieved in the face of limitations of financial and human resources, would prove to be inefficient and uneconomical use of the educational resources of the state.

The state's larger school districts also have service needs, although differing somewhat from those of small school districts, which are not most efficiently and effectively met on an individual district basis.

Recognizing the needs of local school districts to receive assistance from an outside agency, questions concerning the nature of this agency arise.

In Iowa, the most obvious agency to consider is the middle echelon unit, the county school system. The middle unit of a three-echelon state system appears to be the most desirable agency to serve in this crucial role. This is true because of its place between the two other levels of school government, making it close enough to local school districts to be aware of and responsive to local needs and yet broadly enough conceived to provide needed services. However, as presently structured, the county unit of school administration is wholly unable to fill this role. In most cases, the enrollment size is limited to the extent that ineffective use of tax dollars and qualified personnel would result.

If the county unit in Iowa is to legitimately hold its place in the state system of public education, it must undergo pronounced changes in its structure and philosophy.

The necessary adaptations must begin with the creation of intermediate units of sufficient enrollment and financial resources in order to be able to plan comprehensive programs and services in response to the needs of local school districts, large and small, within its constituency, and attract qualified personnel to implement these services at a high level of competency.

In view of the unequal educational opportunities in Iowa and the increasing demands placed on education by a changing society, the need for this adaptation is urgent.

Iowa presently has the necessary legal framework to create multi-county regional educational service agencies. Further, this concept enjoys the support of the State Department of Public Instruction which very early envisioned the potential of this type of unit for the state system of education. All that remains is to develop the support of the profession and the public.

The commitment in Iowa to local school district reorganization coupled with the restructuring of the county school system, and the newly created area community college, area vocational-technical districts along with the other public institutions of higher education, could secure for the state the most comprehensive and adaptable state system of public education in the nation.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN IOWA

The need for the creation of multi-county regional educational service agencies in Iowa was identified in the preceding section. However, it is to be recognized that there are a number of other alternatives for the improvement of the state system of public education which are available to decision-makers in the state. The major alternatives appear to be the following: (1) to encourage the formation of larger local school districts, (2) to encourage cooperative agreements between local administrative units, (3) to decentralize the State Department of Public Instruction and create regional administrative and service branches throughout the state, and (4) to assign the responsibility for providing services to local school districts to post high school institutions.

Each of these approaches is currently in practice to some degree in a number of states. Each, to be certain, has a number of arguments in its favor. However, each has a number of basic philosophical or structural disadvantages which out-weigh the advantages of their use individually or collectively in the state of Iowa.

A discussion of the four major alternatives follows.

Encourage the Development of Larger Local School Districts

Iowa has made great strides in the past in reducing the number of small, marginal high school districts, and, in general, improving the legal structure of local school district organization. The state's record in this regard is to be lauded. Further, the continuous efforts of the State Board of Public Instruction, the State Department of Public Instruction, and other individuals and organizations to create more adequate local administrative units are to be supported by all educational interests in the state.

However, the creation of local school districts of the size required to provide a quality educational program faces serious obstacles. The feasibility of establishing administrative units with minimum enrollments of 5,000 to 10,000 students is questionable. The geographic and demographic characteristics of the state make such efforts questionable from both a practical and philosophical standpoint. Even if this were possible, there would still exist a need for a service agency to provide a number of programs and services to local units who could not provide such services as economically, efficiently, or effectively as could be done by a service agency.

Encourage Cooperation Between Local Units

Another major alternative available to decision-makers is the encouragement of cooperative agreements between local school districts. This approach, which could be promoted through legislative, financial, or other incentives, could take one of two major forms, or a combination of both. The smaller districts in the state could be encouraged to cooperate with other small districts for the provision of needed educational programs, or smaller units could enter into cooperative agreements with neighboring larger districts.

This approach is at best a stop-gap measure toward the regional concept. It is vulnerable to changes in personnel or changes in the commitment of administrative and policy-making bodies in the units involved. Such agreements would typically be subject to annual negotiation or would lack other vital features necessary for long-range educational planning in the administrative units engaged in such programs.

Such cooperative activities would in many cases require agreements between many schooldistricts in order to secure the necessary enrollment or financial base. The coordinative efforts to initiate, maintain, and improve such agreements of this temporary nature appears to be a serious obstacle.

Decentralize the State Education Agency

A third major alternative to the provision of programs and services to local school districts is the decentralization of the state educational agency by creating regional administrative and service branches in various geographic regions of the state.

This plan would tend to create an environment in which the ministerial and regulatory functions of such service agencies would tend to dominate. To be certain, these functions are crucial in the administration of a state system of education. However, in the unit designed to provide services to local school districts, these functions should be secondary and if allowed to dominate would tend to lessen the effectiveness of the service role and, in addition, weaken the important educational considerations of local determination and local control.

This plan would require a large number of professional personnel in the state agency, a seemingly undesirable and unnecessary centralization of staff.

Also, the greatly increased involvement of the state agency in the service function would lessen its ability to continue to perform the important role of educational leadership, coordination, and long-range planning so vital to the state system of education.

Provide Services Through Post High School Institutions

A final major alternative to the provision of needed educational programs and services to local school districts is to provide these services through post high school educational institutions, namely, area community college, area vocational-technical schools, public four-year colleges and universities, or some combination of both.

Although these agencies do have important roles to perform for public elementary and secondary education in the state, they are essentially consultative in nature. The primary role of post high school institutions is the provision of educational programs for the post high school age population of the state. For them to dissipate their human and financial resources and undertake still another vital role would tend to weaken their existing commitments. Further, it is questionable whether or not personnel and policy-making boards can reasonably be expected to be competent in such diverse planes as would be required.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this chapter to summarize the major recommendations of the study. Recommendations relating to the following topics will be discussed:

1. The creation of multi-county regional educational service agencies.
2. The governance of multi-county regional educational service agencies.
3. Criteria for establishment of multi-county regional educational service agencies.
4. The place of the multi-county regional educational service agency in the state system of public education.
5. The role and function of multi-county regional educational service agencies.
6. The role and function of advisory groups.
7. Staffing multi-county regional educational service agencies.
8. Guidelines to govern the relationships of regional educational service agencies and constituent local school districts, State Department of Public Instruction, other educational agencies, and other governmental sub-divisions.
9. The financing of multi-county regional educational service agencies.
10. Needed changes in existing legislation.

THE CREATION OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

The study recommends that RESA Units be created under the existing permissive legislative, with only minor modifications which are identified in a proposed legislative action program.

This position is held and the study recommends avoiding mandating mergers until it appears evident that:

1. County school systems move too slowly toward merger, and/or
2. Mergers which do take place prove to be inadequate, necessitating additional merger action. It is hoped that the State of Iowa can avoid reliving the painful history of local school district reorganization as it restructures the county school system.

THE GOVERNANCE OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Independent Governing Board

It is recommended that an independent governing board be maintained for multi-county regional educational service agencies. This position is advocated even though these units and area community college or area vocational-

technical districts might be coterminous and although close coordination is recommended on certain program objectives, for example, data processing or the possible sharing of some personnel.

While it is quite true that a single board for both institutions might enjoy certain legal and financial advantages, it appears that the welfare of both would be best assured and their effectiveness maximized if the two agencies remain separate.

This is true for a number of reasons, chief of which are the following:

1. In terms of program mix, the regional educational service agencies are oriented essentially toward elementary and secondary educational programs, whereas area community college or area vocational-technical schools are essentially oriented toward post high school programs.

2. In terms of organizational theory and practice, regional educational service agencies are essentially service agencies, whereas area community college or area vocational-technical schools are primarily operational organizations. This distinction, which should not be minimized, requires that the two institutions operate under somewhat differing philosophies, organizational climate, and organizational machinery.

3. It appears that greater "expertise" can be provided through separate administrative units. It is not reasonable to expect either professional personnel or members of policy boards to be effective on such different and diverse planes.

Hopefully, measures will be taken in all areas of the state to ensure that close coordination and planning be done by both units of school government as they serve a common geographic area, and, in some cases, a common clientele. It appears that much of the machinery and processes for such close coordination and planning is already present in Iowa in that both units, as integral parts of the state system of public education, are under the immediate jurisdiction of the State Board of Public Instruction. The State Board of Public Instruction has clearly demonstrated in recent years its concern for all component parts of the state school system, and of most importance, its ability to implement long-range, statewide educational planning.

Election of Board Members

Local control and local determination are important and cherished features of the American public school system. An integral part of this concept is that public educational systems be governed by boards of representative lay people chosen by popular election and that these public bodies serve in a policy-making role in the governance of public educational institutions.

It is recommended that the governing boards of regional educational service agencies be chosen by public election for six-year terms. It is further recommended that the existing legislation limiting the number of board members to seven be changed to permit either a nine-member or eleven-member board, the decision to be based on local determination at the time the board is created. It appears that the larger board minimizes what would seem to be two conflicting views or needs, namely, that recognition be given to the "one man-one vote" concept, and that recognition be given to the geographic considerations implicit in the regional service unit. It is therefore recommended that director districts for the governing boards of multi-county regional educational service agencies be established which give recognition to both population factors and other "rational" characteristics, such as geographic area. While it is true that the larger board could present certain organizational problems, it appears that this alternative is far better than attempting to structure the governing board solely on the basis of population.

CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

In proposing the creation of a network of multi-county regional educational service agencies in Iowa, it is essential that criteria be developed for their establishment in order that these units can perform the vital function in

the state system of education envisioned for them. In addition, the development of criteria should aid in the planning and establishment of the units.

Basis of Proposed Criteria

The criteria proposed in the study are based on (1) student population requirements and accepted incidence ratios necessary to provide an efficient and economical base for various educational programs and services, (2) staffing requirements, (3) recognition of major geographic and demographic characteristics of Iowa, and (4) a review of the literature concerning present practices and recommendations of criteria for intermediate units.

Proposed Criteria

Five criteria, three considered to be major and two considered to be minor, are proposed. They are as follows:

Major Criteria

1. A minimum public school enrollment in grades K-12 of 30,000 students.
2. A minimum assessed valuation of $300,000,000.
3. A maximum of one-hour driving time from the service center(s) to local public school districts in the area served.

Minor Criteria

4. A minimum total population of 100,000.
5. A minimum number of 1,200 professional personnel in the local public school districts in the area served.

It is important to note that the criteria are stated in terms of minimum requirements considered to be necessary for the establishment of the units. In stating minimum standards, a danger exists that they will be employed as maximal standards. This is not the intent since in many cases more optimal considerations above these levels can be achieved. They are stated in minimal terms, however, in recognition of the existing characteristics of the state.

A brief discussion of each criterion which expresses the rationale for its use follows.

Minimum Public School Enrollment. A minimum enrollment size of 30,000 students in grades K-12 was deemed to be necessary for the economic and efficient provision of many of the programs and services that the regional educational service agency should provide.

The rationale used in adopting this minimum enrollment size employed, in part, student incidence ratios or staffing ratios which are commonly accepted, or were determined on the basis of certain assumptions made in the study.

Illustrative staffing ratios which were utilized are listed below.

Special Education[1]

Specialist, Educable Mentally Retarded: 1 per 600 students
Specialist, Trainable Mentally Retarded: 1 per 2,500 students
Specialist, Visually Handicapped (Blind): 1 per 15,000 students
Specialist, Visually Handicapped (Partially Sighted): 1 per 15,000 students
Specialist, Physically Handicapped: 1 per 12,000 students
Therapist, Physically Handicapped: 1 per 30,000 students
Specialist, Gifted: 1 per 1,000 students
Therapist, Speech: 1 per 2,400 students

[1]These staffing ratios are based on total student enrollment.

Hearing Clinician: 1 per 9,000 students
Psychologist: 1 per 3,000 students
School Social Worker: 1 per 3,000 students
Specialist for Hard of Hearing or Deaf: 1 per 15,000 students
Homebound Teacher: 1 per 15,000 students

Programs and Services[1]

Data Processing: minimum of 50,000 students
Attendance Officer: 1 per 6,000 students
Health Nurse: 1 per 2,000 students
Dental Hygienist: 1 per 2,000 students

Curricular Subject Matter Consultants

Elementary Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science Consultants: 1 per 200 teachers per subject matter area
Secondary Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science Consultants: 1 per 200 teachers per subject matter area
Elementary-Secondary (K-12) Art, Music, Library, Foreign Language, Guidance, Business Education, Home-making, Industrial Arts, Physical Education, and Driver Education Consultants: A minimum of 1 per subject matter area

No known standard is available for determining the type and number of curricular consultants. Therefore, certain basic assumptions were made in the identification of the staffing ratios for curricular consultants cited above. These are:

1. That the provision of curricular consultant services to local school districts will be one of the major functions of multi-county regional educational service agencies.

2. That the consultants employed by the regional educational service agency will for the most part initiate and guide curriculum development activities in constituent local school districts rather than personally develop curriculum guides and materials for individual schools.

3. That the majority of the smaller local districts in the state will continue to be unable to employ special subject matter consultants.

4. That when feasible, more than one consultant in similar subject matter areas be employed in order to permit professional communication.

Minimum Assessed Valuation. In order to provide the comprehensive educational program envisioned for the multi-county regional educational service agency, adequate financial resources must be available to the service unit. In addition, it is hoped that the multi-county units will not compete with local school districts and other educational institutions for financial resources. Thus, the proposed criteria for the minimum assessed valuation of each multi-county unit was set at $300,000,000. A one-mill levy on this minimum assessed valuation, while it may not be sufficient to support a comprehensive service unit in all parts of the state and is clearly not recommended in this study as a desirable limit, would, in most cases, generate approximately $300,000 of available tax resources for the multi-county unit. It is assumed that a more efficient and economical utilization of financial and human resources will result from the provision of many programs on a broader base provided through the establishment of multi-county service agencies.

Maximum Driving Time. The programs and services of a multi-county regional educational service agency must be accessible to constituent districts. Distance and travel time become important considerations in the establishment of regional service units.

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[1]These staffing ratios are based on total student enrollment.

Therefore, it is proposed that a travel time of no more than one hour exist between the service center, or centers, and the school district in its constituency. This will ensure that the programs and services of the unit are both physically and operationally accessible to constituent districts and will promote greater utilization of these programs and services. Further, travel time of the personnel of the agency is reduced to a practical level.

Minor Criteria. In many respects the two minor criteria proposed are related to or are a function of the three major criteria. They are proposed for one or more of the following reasons: (1) to serve as a check that one or more of the major criteria are satisfied, and (2) to ensure that at least a minimum program is offered by a multi-county regional educational service agency.

THE PLACE OF THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY IN THE STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The proposed role of the multi-county regional educational service agency in the state system of public education is shown in Figure 1. The chart clearly shows the formal, legal relationships that currently exist among and between all component parts of the state system of public education. The State Board of Public Instruction is shown to have legal responsibility over the administration and organization of local school districts, regional educational service agencies, and jointly with the State Board of Regents, the area community college or area vocational-technical districts.

The chart illustrates the legal relationship that exists between the regional educational service agency and local school districts, largely in the form of ministerial responsibilities and liaison functions, and with the State Department of Public Instruction, largely in the form of ministerial coordination and liaison functions.

The chart also depicts the cooperative relationships that should exist among and between all component parts of the state system of public education. For example, the large number of services provided by regional educational service agencies are illustrated as cooperative relationships even though they may be viewed as, or in fact, be, voluntary and legal in nature, perhaps through a contractual agreement.

In addition, the chart illustrates the desired cooperative relationship that should exist between the multi-county regional educational service agencies and area community college or area vocational-technical districts. Clearly there is a need for cooperative action on certain program objectives of the two units. This coordination on a regional basis can be expedited on a statewide basis in that both units are under the immediate jurisdiction of the State Board of Public Instruction.

Also illustrated in the organization chart of the state system of public education is the desired coordination and cooperative activity of all units of school government. The machinery to bring about joint planning by all levels of education in Iowa—local, regional, and state—is presently available, as is the legal framework under which the implementation of joint planning can be realized.

THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

The proposed role and function of multi-county regional educational service agencies are difficult to classify into discreet categories. For purposes of identifying the recommended major areas of concern of these units, the diverse program and services envisioned for these units are classified into three major categories; articulative functions, coordinative functions, and suppiemental service functions.*

A brief description of each category and illustrative example of the wide range of possible programs and services within each category follows.

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*A large number of taxonomys are currently in use in classifying programs and services of intermediate units. The system used in the study was perfected by Alvin E. Rhodes in his excellent monograph: "Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units," Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1963.

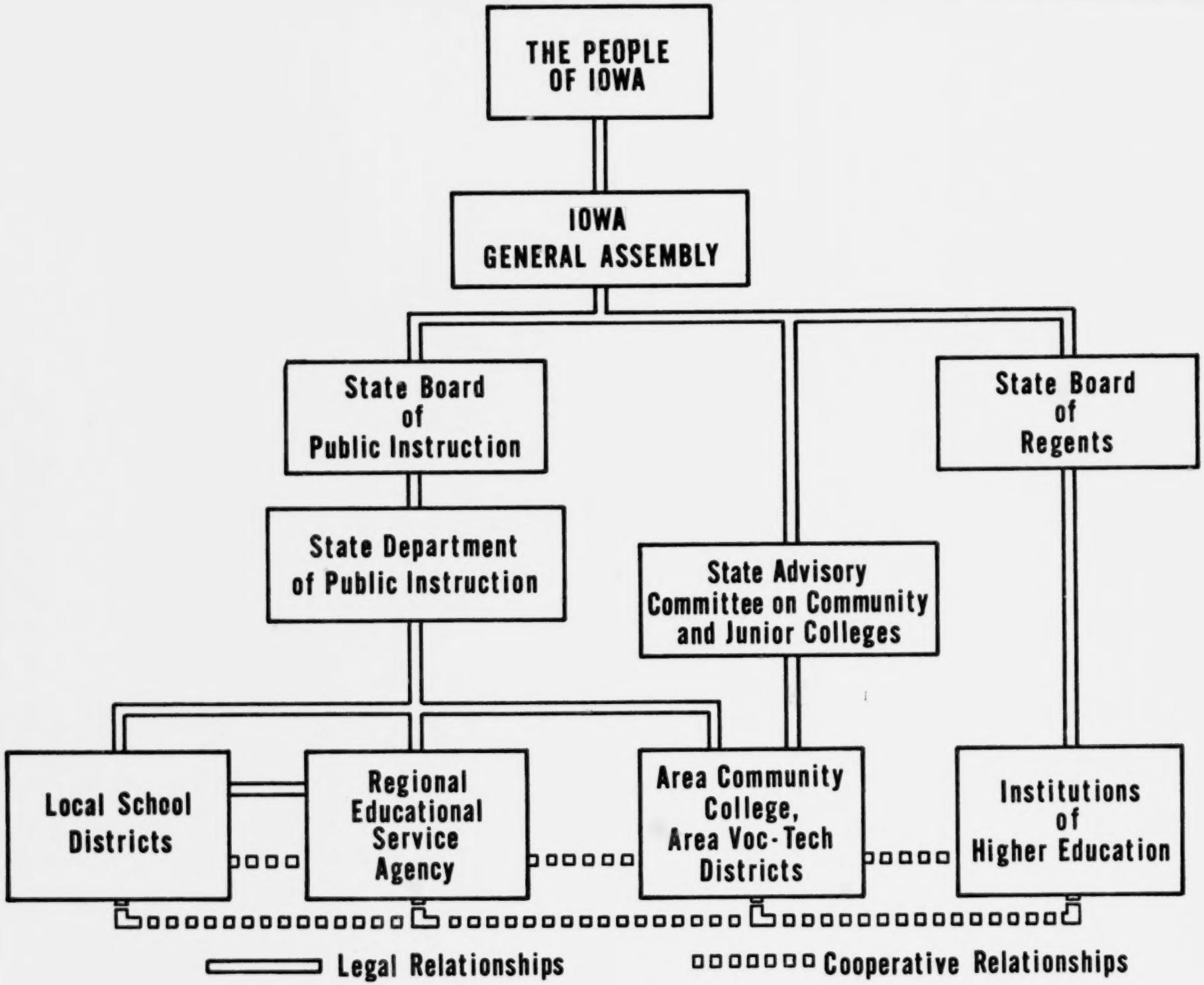

THE PEOPLE OF IOWA
IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
State Board of Public Instruction
State Department of Public Instruction
State Advisory Committee on Community and Junior Colleges
State Board of Regents
Local School Districts
Regional Educational Service Agency
Area Community College, Area Voc-Tech Districts
Institutions of Higher Education
Legal Relationships
Cooperative Relationships

Figure 1

THE PLACE OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES IN THE STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Articulative Functions

The multi-county regional educational service agency should perform a number of regulatory and ministerial functions for the state education agency. In this sense it localizes state school system operations and at the same time represents and interprets local educational needs at the state level. By performing these liaison functions, the regional educational service agency serves a vital role in the vertical and horizontal development and implementation of statewide educational planning, and the administration of the state school system.

Coordinative Functions

The multi-county regional educational service agency in its coordinative role should provide one of its major contributions to its constituent local school districts and to the state system of education. By coordinating the work of local school districts, it serves a vital leadership role in the improvement of education. This will usually be done by assisting local school districts in working together to solve their common problems and needs.

In addition, these coordinative functions help protect the local control and the independence of local school districts in that coordinative functions are provided among and for school districts within the regional educational service agency assuming primary responsibility for them.

Supplementary Service Functions

The multi-county regional educational service agency, in its supplemental service role, complements the role of local school districts by providing direct educational services to them that they are unable to provide efficiently, effectively, or economically by themselves. Generally, these direct services are the type that local school districts would provide but are unable to do so because of limited student population, financial resources, personnel, or other factors.

The provision of these direct services also protects local control, and of great importance, helps to equalize and extend quality educational opportunities to all children, regardless of birthright or place of residency. It does not necessarily follow that the provision of these direct services to smaller, marginal school districts will perpetuate such districts and serve as an obstacle to the creation of administrative units of adequate size in the state. Rather, there is sufficient empirical support that a strong regional educational service agency will promote, not retard, local school district reorganization, particularly when other complementary legal incentives for school district reorganization exist.

Philosophical Guidelines for the
Development of Programs and Services

A number of philosophical guidelines under which services and programs of multi-county regional educational service agencies should be developed are offered with the hope that they will provide guidance to educational decision-makers as they determine the specific program mix for each unit. The guidelines which follow are to be viewed as universal in nature. Clearly there is a need for the adoption of more specific guidelines appropriate for each region of the state.

1. Regional educational service agencies should provide direct educational services for any local school district unable to provide these services efficiently, effectively, and economically.

2. All service programs should be developed to meet the needs of the area served, based on detailed study and analysis.

3. Each regional educational service agency should develop its own pattern of programs and services reflecting the needs of its constituent local school districts and community. Efforts should be made to guard against a fixed pattern or scope of services which all regional agencies in the state shall provide.

4. The services of the regional educational service agencies should be highly specialized, coordinated with other educational agencies, and never duplicating other operations in the state school system. The rationale underlying the allocation of functions among legal and quasi-legal educational agencies should be determined according to the criterion of which agency or level of school government can best perform each service.

5. The services of regional educational service agencies should be physically and operationally accessible to constituent local school districts and to the community served.

6. The program and services of regional educational service agencies should be reviewed and evaluated on a periodic, systematic basis to determine changing needs and the effectiveness of current programs. Constituent local school districts should play a major role in these processes.

Illustrative Examples of Potential Programs and Services

The potential programs and services of regional service units are many. For purposes of illustration, potential programs and services have been arbitrarily classified into the following five categories: (1) Administrative and Staff Personnel; (2) Instructional; (3) Student Personnel; (4) Special Education; and (5) Research and Development.

Administrative and Staff Personnel Programs and Services. A large number of administrative and staff personnel programs and services are required in the effective operation of an educational institution. Illustrative examples include:

1. Administrative and business management consultant services.

2. In-service programs for members of boards of education and board secretaries and treasurers.

3. School building site consultant services.

4. School district reorganization consultant services.

5. Data processing services.

6. Public information services.

7. Cooperative purchasing programs.

8. In-service programs for classroom teachers, specialists, supervisors, consultants, and administrators.

9. In-service programs for non-certificated personnel including transportation, food services, maintenance and custodial, secretarial and clerical, and other supportive personnel.

10. Substitute teacher services.

11. Services for the state education agency.

12. Coordinative activities with other health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors, and other governmental subdivisions.

Instructional Programs and Services. It is in the area of instructional programs and services that regional educational service agencies can make their greatest contribution. This is its *raison d'etre.* Illustrative examples include:

1. Educational media center.

2. Elementary and secondary curriculum consultant services.

3. Outdoor education programs.

4. Remedial instruction programs and services.

5. Health consultant programs and services.

6. Testing programs and services.

7. Institutionalized children's educational programs.

Student Personnel Programs and Services. Student personnel services has become a highly specialized area in recent years. The contributions of comprehensive student personnel services to an educational program are well recognized. Illustrative examples include:

1. Consultant services for student personnel programs.

2. In-service programs for guidance counselors and other professional personnel.

3. Other student personnel programs and services including graduate follow-up studies and drop-out studies.

Special Education Programs and Services. As part of its commitment to assist constituent local school districts in providing the best educational program possible for all children, RESA Units have a major responsibility in the education of exceptional children. Illustrative examples include:

1. Programs for trainable retarded children.

2. Work-study programs.

3. Programs for emotionally disturbed children.

4. Psychological and psychiatric services.

5. Programs for physically handicapped children and children with special health problems.

6. Programs for exceptional children of pre-school age.

7. Homebound instruction programs.

8. Programs for gifted children.

9. Programs for partially-sighted and blind children.

10. Programs for hard-of-hearing and deaf children.

11. Programs for speech handicapped children.

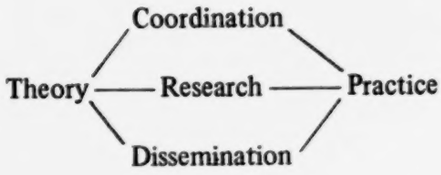
12. School social work services.

13. Programs for children with specific learning disabilities.

14. Providing coordinative and cooperative efforts for the many health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors.

Research and Development Programs and Services. Educational research is a main form of investing in the educational process. Yet few school districts are able to engage in necessary research and development programs. While colleges and universities and professional organizations do contribute greatly to educational research, it is recognized that a definite lag exists in the implementation of the findings of this research.

It is in the area of research and development that RESA Units can make a major contribution. The role of a RESA Unit is visualized as follows:



The agency is in a key position to develop theory into practice, to conduct action research in the examination of current educational practices, and to coordinate and disseminate the finding of research. This will prove to be a major contribution to education and exemplifies the regional educational service agency's vital role in the state system of education.

Illustrative examples include:

1. Budget analysis and cost studies.
2. Long-range financial planning.
3. Community surveys.
4. Enrollment studies.
5. Pilot projects in various curricular areas.
6. Evaluation of instructional materials.
7. Development of local school district and regional norms for standardized tests.
8. Evaluation of various types of organizational and grouping practices.

The above listings of illustrative examples in each of the five categories should not be considered as complete. Rather, they are intended to show the nature and scope of potential programs and services which might result from careful study and analysis of a given area.

Guidelines for Establishing Priorities

In the operation of RESA Units the question of establishing priorities for the allocation of available human and financial resources of the units is important. In order to aid the governing board and staff of the service unit, certain guidelines for the determination of priorities are offered. It is recommended that the following criteria be considered in determining priorities:

1. The needs of local school districts.
2. The cruciality of the needs of local school districts.
3. The potential for the improvement of education.

4. The equalization of educational opportunity.

5. The number of students and school districts to be served.

6. The efficient and economic use of human resources of constituent local school districts and of the service unit.

7. The efficient and economic use of financial resources of constituent local school districts and of the service unit.

8. The degree of compatibility with the philosophy of the service unit.

9. Existing or potential availability on a comparable level through another educational agency.

10. The evaluation of existing programs and services.

In the implementation of the priorities, certain procedures should be followed by the governing board and staff of RESA Units. First, it is essential that pertinent information related to a program or service under consideration be available. Second, it is important that the program or service in question be viewed not in isolation or in contrast to one or two other specific programs or services, but rather, in relation to the total program mix of the service agency. Third, the active participation of local school district personnel in the determination of priorities is critical. If these cautions and recommendations are followed, the ten guidelines should serve as a valuable test of fit.

THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF ADVISORY GROUPS

The multi-county regional educational service agency has as its primary responsibility the provision of programs and services to constituent local school districts. This is its *raison d'etre.* Although the service unit performs certain ministerial and regulatory functions for the state education agency, these are secondary to the agency's primary objective. Further, the programs and services of the regional service agency should be reviewed and evaluated on a periodic, systematic basis to determine changing needs and the effectiveness of current programs to local school districts.

For these and other pragmatic as well as philosophical reasons, it is crucial to the success of the multi-county unit that close cooperation, coordination, and joint planning be done with constituent local school districts and that a structure be built into the operations of the service unit to expedite and facilitate the involvement of local school district personnel in the planning of programs and services.

It is, therefore, recommended that a general advisory council and other special advisory groups be established. The major role and function of the council and advisory committees are discussed.

The Role and Function of the Administrator's Advisory Council

The primary role and function of the Administrator's Advisory Council, the general advisory committee for the service unit, shall be to advise and counsel the administrative personnel of the RESA Unit on the programs and services of the unit which are provided to local school districts.

In fulfillment of this objective, the advisory council should engage in the following activities:

1. Assist in the evaluation of existing programs and services.

2. Recommend new programs and services.

3. Serve as a communication link between the service unit and local school districts and the region.

4. Provide guidance and assistance to the staff of the service unit in long-range planning and development.

It is to be noted that the advisory council does not in any way usurp any of the prerogatives of the administrative staff or of the governing board of the service unit. The proposed role and function of the advisory council does not include legislative or administrative responsibilities.

Membership. The Advisory Council should be composed of the superintendents of local school districts. *Ex officio* and non-voting membership on the Advisory Council should be granted to all elementary and secondary principals in constituent local districts.

The Role and Function of Divisional Advisory Committees

In addition to the local school district Administrator's Advisory Council, it is recommended that advisory committees be established for each of the proposed five divisions of the service unit—Division of Administrative and Staff Personnel Services, Division of Instructional Services, Division of Special Education Services, Division of Pupil Personnel Services, and Division of Research and Development.

The role and function of divisional advisory committees is similar to that of the general advisory committee, namely:

1. Assist in the evaluation of the existing programs and services offered by the division.

2. Recommend new programs and services for the division.

3. Serve as a communications link between the service unit and local school districts and the region.

4. Provide guidance and assistance in long-range planning and development.

As was true of the Administrator's Council, the divisional advisory committees have no administrative or legislative responsibilities. Rather, their function is to offer advice and counsel to personnel of the service unit.

Membership. It is recommended that each divisional advisory committee be composed of twenty professional staff members of constituent local school districts selected by the director of the division for a one-year term with reappointment possible. In the selection of members the following factors should be given equal consideration:

1. A need for balance in representation of members from local school districts of various enrollment sizes.

2. A need for balance in representation of members from elementary and secondary levels.

3. A need for balance in representation of members from classroom teachers and supervisory or administrative levels.

4. A need for representation of members of non-public elementary and secondary school staffs for those programs which are financed in part or in whole with federal funds.

STAFFING MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Much of the success of the operation of multi-county regional educational service agencies will depend upon the caliber of personnel comprising the staff.

The study proposes guidelines concerning selected aspects of a staffing program including the philosophical commitment for excellence in staffing, administration of the personnel program, recruitment and induction of personnel, personnel policy development, salary schedule development and other compensatory considerations, a planned program for staff development, evaluation of personnel, and professional staff organizations.

A Philosophical Commitment for Excellence in Staffing.

It is emphasized in the report that the quality of the staff of the regional service agency and the efficiency with which it performs its tasks will determine in large measure whether or not the service agency achieves its vital role in education.

The recruitment, development, and retention of highly competent personnel, then, becomes a crucial concern of the governing board and administrative personnel of the unit. Staffing for excellence should form the framework for such aspects of the organization as the organizational structure of the unit, board policies and administrative rules and regulations, budget considerations, and programs and services.

A philosophical commitment to excellence of staffing requires that the governing board will provide the wherewithal to recruit and attract the most highly qualified personnel available who are specialists in their fields, possessing proficiencies equal to or greater than the personnel of local school districts in the area served. Further, this commitment means that optimal working conditions and compensatory considerations will be provided in order to retain qualified staff and develop their full capabilities.

Elements of a Staff Development Program for Professional Personnel

A number of in-service activities for professional personnel of RESA Units are recommended. These are:

1. Provision for attendance at regional and state professional conferences in their area of specialization should be made. Specifically, it is recommended that provision be made for all staff members to attend all regional and state meetings in their specific area.

2. Provision for attendance at national meetings in their area of specialization is recommended. It is suggested that administrators and directors attend their national professional meetings annually, that new staff members automatically attend national meetings held during their first year of employment, and that, in addition, one-third of the staff members of each program area (e.g., curriculum consultants, psychologists, speech therapists) should attend one meeting each year.

3. Provision should be made for staff members to attend regional and state meetings of organizations closely related to the activities of the RESA Units.

4. Provision for consultant services.

5. Provision for periodic staff meetings of the several divisions and of the general staff.

6. Provision for periodic workshops.

7. Provision for periodic institutes.

8. Provision for attendance at clinics and short courses.

9. Provision for enrollment in extension and resident classes at colleges and universities.

10. Provision for selected individual and group intervisitations to other regional educational service agencies in the state, region, and nation on an annual basis.

11. Provision for joint in-service activities with other regional educational service agencies.

12. Provision for periodically scheduled reassignment of responsibilities for some staff members who work in closely related areas of specialization.

13. Provision for professional leaves of absence.

14. Provision for adequate professional library resources through an initial budget allocation of $3,000 and liberal annual provisions thereafter.

15. Provision for independent study, research, and writing.

16. Provision for active participation in individual and organizational evaluation procedures and programs.

Financial Commitment to Staff Development

Nearly all of the recommended staff development activities involve the expenditure of funds. The governing board and administrative personnel must view the allocation of financial resources for staff development as an allocation of the highest priority.

Clearly the fact that the high degree of staff competency required by the service agency and a more pragmatic view of protecting the single largest expenditure of the unit justifies the investment of financial resources in staff development.

As a planning guideline, it is recommended that approximately 2 per cent of the total annual budget of the service unit be appropriated for staff development.

GUIDELINES TO GOVERN THE RELATIONSHIP OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES AND CONSTITUENT LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, OTHER EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SUBDIVISIONS

The Need for Communication, Coordination, and Cooperation

It has been emphasized that RESA Units are a service agency instituted to provide programs and services to local school districts. As such it will be in a position to provide services indirectly through the local school districts to the same clientele served by numerous agencies and organizations in the public and private sectors. The need for close communication and coordination with other agencies is patently clear.

Historically, however, coordination of this type has seldom existed. This is true for several reasons, including the unilateral action taken by agencies in the provision of services to the public, fragmentation of services and efforts, and duplication of programs. These conditions exist because of administrative or other legal constraints and because of the lack of awareness of the need and beneficial aspects resulting from coordination and cooperation between agencies providing related services to the same public.

Further, many social problems or needs in modern society are not restricted by political or other artificial boundaries. In view of this fact increasing attention in recent years has been given to the importance of cooperation

between governmental agencies and other service-oriented organizations. This growing realization of the value of coordination and cooperation is based in large measure on a recognition that the planning and efforts of various agencies in a common geographic area are, in the final analysis, directed in many cases toward identical purposes and achievements.

The regional service agency, designed to provide services for a broader area, can serve as a needed catalyst to coordinate the efforts of many organizations and agencies and bring about needed cooperation between them.

Legislative Framework for Coordination and Cooperation

A number of statutes have been enacted in recent years in Iowa which promote and encourage intergovernmental relations and which provide the legal framework within which extensive cooperative agreements may be made.

Chapter 28D.3, *Code of Iowa,* 1965, permits the interchange of personnel between governmental levels and agencies. Chapter 239, *Code of Iowa,* 1965, was amended to permit school districts to participate with counties, cities, and towns in the joint use of public buildings to be operated by a public authority. A third significant bill, Chapter 28E.3, *Code of Iowa*, 1965, permits the joint exercise of governmental powers by federal, state, and local levels of government.

Necessary Action by the Governing Board

In order that RESA Units may serve as a catalyst for the promotion of cooperative effort, it will be necessary for the board of education to hold a commitment recognizing the importance of cooperation, coordination, and communication between agencies in the public and private sectors.

This commitment should be manifested in the adoption of policy statements, action programs, and the willingness to allocate funds for many activities for which guidelines are recommended.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Constituent Local School Districts

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units respect the autonomy of constituent local school districts in its relationship with local administrative units.

2. That RESA Units be committed to the position that its activities will be designed to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of local school districts.

3. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official for the agency with constituent local school districts. The major responsibility of the staff member should be to coordinate the activities of the agency with local districts.

4. That local school districts be encouraged to designate one staff member in each attendance center to serve as a coordinator for the instructional media center of RESA Units.

5. That personnel of RESA Units be instrumental in the organization of regional professional associations such as associations of elementary, junior high, and senior high principals, guidance counselors, curriculum consultants, and other professional groups. Staff members of the agency should be encouraged to serve as secretaries of these associations and to render all assistance to the associations in their professional activities.

6. That personnel of RESA Units be instrumental in the organization of regional associations of non-certificated personnel such as associations of business managers, bus drivers, custodial and maintenance personnel, secretarial

personnel, and other non-certificated personnel. Staff members of the agency should be encouraged to serve as secretaries of these organizations and render all assistance to the organizations in their activities.

7. That personnel of RESA Units be instrumental in the organization of regional associations of school board members and board secretaries and that staff members should be encouraged to serve as secretaries to these associations and render all assistance to the organizations in their activities.

8. That RESA Units install a direct-line telephone in each constituent local school district.

9. That local school districts receive a monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications of RESA Units.

10. That local school districts be encouraged to schedule as part of their orientation activities for professional and non-professional personnel a discussion of the programs and services of RESA Units, and that personnel of the service agency assist in these sessions.

11. That RESA Units give active support to the administrator's Advisory Council, Divisional Advisory Committees, and other advisory committees which will be comprised of representatives from constituent local school districts.

12. That RESA Units be discreet in scheduling activities involving personnel from constituent local school districts and that constituent districts be encouraged to make it possible for their personnel to participate.

13. That, in general, activities of RESA Units be scheduled during the regular school day since personnel of local districts should not be expected to and cannot adequately perform necessary functions in after-school hours.

14. That RESA Units and constituent local school districts coordinate policy development when it is appropriate and feasible to do so. Potential areas for such joint activity appear to include salary schedules and other compensatory considerations and personnel policies.

15. That RESA Units develop policies and procedures with constituent districts which will insure the confidentiality of information relating to school matters.

16. That policies and procedures be developed to insure that personnel of RESA Units, working in local school districts, be under the immediate jurisdiction of the local school district through its designated official.

17. That RESA Units be responsible for the coordination and planning of programs and services involving two or more local school districts.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with the State Department of Public Instruction

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units encourage the State Board of Public Instruction to create a new division in the State Department of Public Instruction which will deal solely with regional educational service agencies. The division should be administrated by a full-time director with a staff rank of associate superintendent.

2. That RESA Units encourage the State Department of Public Instruction to coordinate all of its programs and activities with local school districts in the state through regional educational service agencies. This procedure can be expedited if personnel of the state agency are designated to work with each regional educational service agency.

3. That RESA Units encourage the State Department of Public Instruction to continue to utilize regional educational service agencies in the statewide planning and implementation of Titles II, III, and VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

4. That RESA Units encourage the State Department of Public Instruction to continue to utilize the multi-county regional approach as it implements other state planning and other federal programs designed for elementary and secondary education.

5. That RESA Units encourage the State Department of Public Instruction to continue to structure the Area Districts for the Improvement of Education within the organizational and operational features of the regional service agencies.

6. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official to coordinate all activities of the agency with the State Department of Public Instruction.

7. That personnel of the State Department of Public Instruction receive the monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications of RESA Units.

8. That RESA Units actively support the efforts of the State Board of Public Instruction and the State Department of Public Instruction to improve public education in the state.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Other Regional Educational Service Agencies

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units lend their support to the establishment of a state association of multi-county regional educational service agencies which should have in addition to a general association, divisions for boards of education, chief administrative officers, and specialists.

2. That RESA Units exchange reports and publications with other regional educational service agencies on a regular systematic basis.

3. That RESA Units jointly support appropriate staff development activities with other regional educational service agencies.

4. That RESA Units consider the feasibility of jointly contracting with other regional educational service agencies for the employment of some highly specialized personnel who might be needed by the agencies for special projects.

5. That RESA Units consider the feasibility of jointly contracting with other regional educational service agencies for the provision of some highly specialized services to local school districts.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with the Area Community Colleges and Area Vocational-Technical Schools

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units assign one staff member to serve as a liaison official with the area community college or area vocational-technical school serving the same region.

2. That RESA Units consider the establishment of joint contractual agreements with the area community college or area vocational school for the provision of some services needed by both agencies, local school districts, or other agencies and organizations.

3. That RESA Units consider the establishment of joint contractual agreements with the area community college or area vocational-technical school serving the same region for the joint employment of specialized personnel needed by both agencies in order to promote maximum utilization of human and financial resources.

4. That RESA Units consider the establishment of joint contractual agreements with the area community college or area vocational-technical school serving the same region for the joint purchase and operation of specialized equipment needed by both agencies when this procedure would result in financial advantages to both agencies.

5. That the chief administrators of both agencies hold regularly scheduled conferences at least once a month for joint orientation and planning.

6. That the governing boards of both agencies hold a joint meeting for orientation and planning annually and at other times when necessary.

7. That both agencies jointly engage in long-range planning activities concerning programs and services and capital improvement programs.

8. That both agencies exchange pertinent reports and publications on a regular systematic basis.

9. That both agencies jointly sponsor and conduct research projects such as enrollment projections, community surveys, and other studies of mutual concern to both.

10. That both agencies jointly plan and coordinate personnel policy development including the development of salary schedules and other compensatory considerations.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Other Educational Agencies in the Public Sector

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official with other educational agencies in the public sector.

2. That RESA Units maintain a current inventory of all educational agencies in the public sector and that this inventory be supplied to local school districts, the area community college or area vocational-technical school, and the agencies included in the inventory.

3. That other educational agencies in the public sector receive the RESA Unit monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications.

4. That RESA Units explore contractual agreements with institutions of higher education for the joint employment of personnel and joint use of facilities for some clinical and diagnostic centers in the areas of special education and reading, and instructional media centers.

5. That RESA Units explore contractual agreements with institutions of higher education having teacher education programs, for the joint employment of elementary and secondary curriculum specialists and other specialists in such fields as special education, guidance and counseling, educational media, and educational measurement.

6. That RESA Units explore with the institutions of higher education having graduate training programs, a contractual agreement for the establishment of an annual administrative internship program.

7. That RESA Units explore contractual agreements with four-year colleges in the area for the joint employment of academicians in various disciplines to serve as resource persons for the agency and for local school districts.

8. That RESA Units render all possible assistance and cooperation to other educational agencies in the public sector in their activities and programs.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Voluntary and Other Educational Agencies

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official with voluntary and other educational agencies in the region.

2. That RESA Units maintain a current inventory of all voluntary and other educational agencies and that this inventory be supplied to local school districts, area community college or area vocational-technical schools, and the agencies included in the inventory.

3. That voluntary and other educational agencies receive a copy of the RESA Units monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications.

4. That RESA Units encourage the Iowa State Education Association and other professional organizations in the state to establish a division or section for personnel of regional educational service agencies.

5. That RESA Units make available its facilities to voluntary and other educational agencies for appropriate activities.

6. That RESA Units render all other possible assistance and cooperation to voluntary and other educational agencies in their activities and programs.

7. That RESA Units explore the possibility of the use of the facilities and services of voluntary and other educational agencies in the administration of its programs and services.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Health, Welfare, and Social Agencies in the Public and Private Sectors

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official with health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors.

2. That RESA Units maintain a current inventory of all health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors and that this inventory be supplied to local school districts, area community college or area vocational-technical schools, and the agencies included in the inventory.

3. That health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors receive the RESA Units monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications.

4. That RESA Units render all possible assistance and cooperation to health, welfare, and social agencies in their activities and programs.

5. That personnel of RESA Units volunteer their services and those of the agency to health, welfare, and social agencies in the public and private sectors and that an effort be made to attend meetings of such agencies when possible and to confer on a regular basis with personnel of these agencies.

6. That RESA Units jointly plan and coordinate personnel policy development including the development of salary schedules and other salary considerations with other health, welfare, and social agencies who employ similar personnel with comparable training requirements and employment activities.

7. That RESA Units invite representatives of health, welfare, and social agencies to participate in its activities, when appropriate.

8. That RESA Units lend its support to efforts to remove obstacles which prevent health, welfare, and social agencies from functioning across political boundaries and other legal constraints.

Recommended Guidelines for Relationships with Other Local, Regional, and State Governmental Agencies

It is recommended:

1. That RESA Units designate one staff member to serve as a liaison official with local, regional and state governmental agencies.

2. That RESA Units maintain a current inventory of all local, regional, and governmental agencies and that this inventory be supplied to local school districts, area community college or area vocational-technical schools, and the agencies included in the survey.

3. That other local, regional and state governmental agencies receive the RESA Units monthly newsletter and other pertinent reports and publications.

4. That RESA Units render all possible assistance and cooperation to other local, regional and state governmental agencies in their activities and programs.

5. That personnel of RESA Units maintain regular communication with local, county, and regional planning agencies in the area served by the agency.

6. That personnel of RESA Units maintain regular communication with county zoning commissions in the area served by the agency.

7. That personnel of RESA Units maintain regular contact and communication with county boards of supervision, county engineers, county auditors, county treasurers, county attorneys, and other county officials and agencies in the area served by the unit.

8. That procedures for the preservation and housing of student and professional personnel records, and official school records of each of the existing single-county school systems be made jointly by the respective county boards of supervisors and the governing board of RESA Units.

9. That local and regional governmental agencies be encouraged by RESA Units to participate in the cooperative purchasing program and other appropriate programs and services of the unit.

THE FINANCING OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Proposed Criteria for Financing

Fiscal integrity is the delegation of full responsibility to the governing board of the multi-county regional educational service agency for determining and certifying its own budget. The existing legislation in Iowa grants fiscal integrity to the governing boards of these units and it is recommended that no changes be made.

The existing legislation in Iowa also grants fiscal independence and independent taxing authority to governing boards of multi-county units. These boards are at present delegated full responsibility to determine the purposes for which funds will be used, the amount to be expended, and have the right to certify the monies to be raised through taxation. Their decisions on these matters are not, in practice, subject to review or approval by any other body. It is recommended that the fiscal independence currently enjoyed by multi-county regional educational service agencies be continued.

Sources of Financial Support

Support for the regional educational service agency should come from a number of sources, including state aid, independent taxing authority, contractual agreements with local school districts, federal funds, foundation grants, and gifts. A brief description of each of these potential sources of financial support follows.

The regional educational service agency is an integral part of the state school system. These units perform a number of articulative and coordinative functions which are of benefit to the state school system and therefore should receive substantial state aid on an equalization basis.

In addition, justification for state aids is to be found in the fact that regional educational service agencies contribute materially to a basic fundamental state responsibility of equalizing and extending educational opportunities to all youth, regardless of place of residency. Many local school districts in Iowa are unable to provide needed services and programs to their students because of inadequate financial or student resources, and will receive these programs and services from regional educational service agencies. As such, the multi-county units perform a key role in the equalization of educational opportunities.

A second recommended source of financial support for regional educational service agencies is local tax levies on the service area. The unit, as an autonomous public corporation, should enjoy full fiscal independence and integrity. One of the most damaging obstacles to imaginative and creative programs and services of regional educational service agencies would be the legal constraints imposed on them in the form of restrictions on their fiscal independence and integrity.

A third, but minor, proposed source of financial support for regional educational service agencies should be in the form of contractual agreements with local school districts and other public and private educational agencies.

Although not desirable as a basic source of revenue, contractual agreements with local school districts are appropriate for the following general types of services:

1. Services which are of a special or temporary nature.

2. Services of a special nature which might be provided to one or more, but not most local school districts.

This does not imply that a program or service from which one or more local school districts voluntarily exempt themselves, but which is deemed to be necessary by the majority of districts, is then to be provided on a contractual basis.

Care must be exercised at all times to ensure that this form of financial support remains ancillary. This, as a basic method of financing, is undesirable for a number of reasons, chiefly:

1. It makes the regional educational service agency dependent upon "year-to-year" contractual agreements, making staffing and long-range planning difficult for both the service unit and constituent local districts.

2. It is unrealistic from the standpoint of the local school districts in that it usually places them in the untenable position of being financially unable to contract for a service when they are perhaps in greatest need of it.

Contractual agreements with other public and private educational agencies should be explored. For example, it appears that some contractual arrangements between regional educational service agencies and area community college, area vocational-technical districts might be feasible for the provision of some programs and the employment of some personnel. A number of services to other local governmental subdivisions also appear to be fruitful of exploration. Permissive legislation allowing such contractual agreements exists in Iowa.

It is proposed that the regional educational service agency continuously inventory and access its eligibility as a recipient of funds in a wide range of federal programs. This agency, operating as it does over a wide geographic region, is in a strategic position to coordinate federal programs of a regional nature.

Concerning the specific programs administered by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, it is anticipated that regional educational service agencies will continue to be utilized in the implementation of numerous programs, notably Titles I, II, III, and VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

It is imperative, however, that extensive dependence upon federal funds be minimized. Federal grant-in-aids are essentially designed to stimulate the improvement of educational programs. They are generally not intended to be on-going funding sources.

It is recommended that regional educational service agencies explore the large number of programs administered through foundation funds. It appears that the regional approach to the provision of educational programs would receive favorable audience by a large number of foundations in the state, region, and nation.

No Bonding Authority Recommended

It is further recommended that regional educational service agencies be prohibited, for the immediate future, from incurring bonded indebtedness for the construction of physical facilities, but rather be granted continued authority to rent and/or lease space and in addition be granted authority to enter into lease-purchase agreements. This position is taken in order that these units not compete with the newly created area community college, area vocational-technical districts who face staggering building needs in the foreseeable future and who will undoubtedly be required to secure numerous public referendums for building purposes.

NEEDED CHANGES IN EXISTING LEGISLATION

The existing permissive legislation in Iowa permitting the formation of multi-county regional educational service agencies does not adequately provide for all proposed criteria, and in addition, the present legislation has certain structural features which might impede the smooth transition from a middle echelon structure composed essentially of single-county school systems to one consisting of multi-county regional educational service agencies.

In this section needed changes in the existing legislation which are primarily based on the proposed criteria are recommended. Implicit in the proposed legislation is recognition that the present legislation relating to the county school system and joint-county systems is basically very sound and thus provides a suitable framework from which to build.

Provisions of Section 273.22, Code of Iowa, 1966, relative to merger of county school systems to form joint-county systems shall be followed in the formation of multi-county regional educational service agencies provided that the following additions or deletions are accomplished by appropriate amendments:

1. A county board of education shall have the authority to merge a county school system or portion thereof with a contiguous county school system(s), or with contiguous portions of contiguous county school systems, or with contiguous joint-county system(s), provided the conditions hereinafter stated are satisfied:

   a. When a merger results in a division of a county school system, the division shall be along local school district boundary lines.

b. No local school district shall be a part of more than one joint-county system. The State Board of Public Instruction shall have the power to adjust the boundaries of a joint-county system so that no local school district shall be a part of more than one joint-county system.

c. When a merger results in a division of a county school system, with the major portion of the county school system being a part of the merger, the State Board of Public Instruction shall have the authority to attach to a contiguous county school system(s) or joint-county system(s) the portion(s) remaining from said county school system(s).

d. When a minor portion of a county school system is merged to become a part of a joint-county system, the county board of education of the remaining portion of that county school system shall reapportion itself into appropriate director districts in accordance with Section 273.3.

2. A joint-county system shall have the authority to merge with another joint-county system; or with county school systems or portions thereof, as stated in 1, above.

3. Joint-county systems which shall be established shall fall within the boundaries of area community college, area vocational districts established under the provisions of Chapter 280A, *Code of Iowa*, 1966. Nothing in this provision shall prohibit the merging into a joint-county system of the entire area of one or more area community college, area vocational districts.

4. Any proposal to form a joint-county system shall be submitted to the State Board of Public Instruction for approval, which approval shall be given only upon proper showing that the following minimum criteria for merger have been met:

a. Criteria for establishment:

(1) Public school enrollment in grades K-12 of 30,000 students.
(2) Assessed valuation $300,000,000.
(3) Maximum one-hour driving time from the service center(s) to local public school districts in the area served.
(4) Total population of 100,000.
(5) Professional personnel totaling 1,200 in the local school districts in the area served.

b. The plans submitted to the State Board of Public Instruction shall include the following additional information:

(1) Area to be included (geographic limits).
(2) Location of the service center(s) of the proposed merged area.
(3) Number and boundaries of director districts.
(4) Such additional information as the State Board of Public Instruction by administrative rule may require.
(5) Proposed name(s) of the merged area.

5. The joint board of education shall consist of nine or eleven members, this decision to be based on local determination, with provision to change this decision every six years, with not more than two members to be elected at large, and the remainder of the members to be nominated by and elected from director districts based on a proper consideration of population and other "rational" factors. Procedures for changing the number of board members shall be developed by the State Board of Public Instruction and shall include provision for this body to approve all such changes.

6. Section 273.22, sub-section 1, *Code of Iowa*, 1966, shall be amended to read: The merged county school system shall be known as the "regional educational service agency, number (to be assigned by the State Board of Public

Instruction)" with which name and number the unit shall be legally identified.

7. Section 273.22, sub-section 2, *Code of Iowa,* 1966, shall be amended to read: The merged system shall have one tax base made up of the combined tax base of the respective county school systems or portions of county school systems.

8. Section 273.22, sub-section 7, *Code of Iowa,* 1966, shall be amended to read: The joint board shall have the authority to provide adequate office facilities by renting, or leasing, or entering into lease-purchase agreements for a period not to exceed ten years.

9. The fiscal year for a joint county system shall be the period beginning July 1 and ending the next June 30.

10. The budget for the joint county system shall be submitted to the county auditor of the county in which the central office of the joint county system is located, who will have the responsibility of prorating the amount to be raised by local taxation among the respective counties or parts thereof, in the proportion that the taxable property in each county or part thereof bears to the total value of the taxable property in the joint-county system.

11. Official publications of the joint-county system shall be published in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the area served by the unit.

12. Taxes collected pursuant to such levy shall be paid by the respective county treasurer to the treasurer of the joint-county system in the same manner that other school taxes are paid to local school districts.

13. A joint-county system board of directors shall be authorized to appoint a secretary and treasurer for said joint system who shall serve for a two-year term.

14. Upon inclusion of the major portion of a county school system in a joint-county system, the responsibility for all records of said county system shall be transferred to the board of directors of the joint-county system.

15. When a county school system is included in its entirety in a joint-county system, all assets and liabilities of that county school system shall be transferred to the said joint-county system.

16. When a county school system is included in part in one or more joint-county systems, a division of assets and liabilities of said county school system shall be made in general agreement with Section 275.29-275.30, *Code of Iowa,* 1966.

17. The merger of joint-county systems shall be voluntary for a three-year period. If after this time voluntary mergers are ineffective because they occur too slowly, then merger shall be mandated.

18. When a statewide network of joint-county school systems has been developed, either through existing permissive legislation or mandate, all areas of the state shall be included, no local school districts shall be exempt from a joint-county system, and all local school districts shall be eligible for all programs and services of the joint-county system.

19. The members of the governing board of the joint-county system shall be reimbursed for expenditures incurred in attending regular and special meetings of the board of education and all other expenditures incurred in the performance of their official duties.

20. The joint-county system board of education shall be authorized to retain legal counsel.

CHAPTER IV

MAJOR BENEFITS RESULTING FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK OF MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES IN THE STATE OF IOWA

INTRODUCTION

If the proposed network of multi-county regional educational service agencies is developed in Iowa and if these units are allowed to function without basic structural deficiencies, several major benefits to the state system of education will result. These new units of school government can:

1. Protect and promote local control and local determination in public education.
2. Equalize and extend educational opportunities.
3. Assure economical and efficient operation of many educational programs.
4. Improve the quality of many educational programs.
5. Provide a needed change agent in education.
6. Promote the restructuring of school government consistent with developments in the public and private sectors.
7. Improve the coordination of local, regional, and statewide educational planning.

MAJOR BENEFITS

Protect and Promote Local Control And Local Determination in Public Education

Local control and local determination are important and cherished features of the American public school system. Many observers hold that these characteristics, although at present undergoing profound reassessment and redefinition, indeed profound change, are still of such import that they need to be guarded and preserved at all costs. Even should one disagree with this position, the political realities are such that local control of education, however defined and evaluated, will continue to be a critical concern of many.

The multi-county regional educational service agency, as structured in existing legislation in Iowa and as recommended in this study, is basically a local agency. While it performs certain ministerial and regulatory duties for the State Department of Public Instruction, it aids in adapting these to local needs and local circumstances.

Further, the multi-county regional educational service agency, by equalizing and extending educational opportunities through its programs and services for constituent local school districts, makes these districts stronger units while retaining maximum policy determination at the local level.

Equalize and Extend Educational Opportunities

A second major benefit to be derived from the establishment of a strong network of multi-county regional educational service agencies is that such a network can help to equalize and extend educational opportunities for all children.

The provision of programs and services to constituent local school districts, who, because of limited student population, limited financial resources, and/or lack of specialized professional personnel, are unable to provide an adequate program will serve to equalize educational opportunity for all children regardless of birthright. The "accident of birth" is perhaps more basic in education than in any other single area of human activity. It must be removed as a serious problem in education.

Further, the shortcomings of instructional programs in many schools are recognized. The multi-county regional educational service agency through the provision of supplementary programs and services can help to extend the educational programs of local school districts. Related to this is the recognition that not all children benefit most by the same educational program. Some children need more instructional attention than others in grades K-12. In addition, many school children require special types of instructional programs in order to receive "an equal educational opportunity." The multi-county regional educational service agency through its supplemental and consultative programs and services can help local school districts to provide the "best" educational program for each child.

Assure Economical and Efficient Operation of Many Educational Programs

A third major benefit which can be realized through the establishment of multi-county regional educational service agencies is the more economical and efficient operation of many educational programs and services on a larger scale. Exemplary of the types of programs which are best suited to the regional approach are many administrative and business management functions, such as joint purchasing and data processing, in-service programs for professional and non-professional personnel, and many programs for exceptional children. The profession in view of the severe competition for financial resources can no longer ignore "economics of scale" which have application for education. Nor can the profession fail to implement procedures which promote the more efficient utilization of human and financial resources in face of demands for more comprehensive educational programs.

Improve the Quality of Many Educational Programs

A fourth major benefit which can result from the establishment of multi-county regional educational service agencies is the improvement of the quality of many educational programs. The regional agency, operating on a broader base, serving a larger student population, and having greater financial assets will be able to attract highly qualified personnel to serve in consultative as well as functional roles in assisting constituent local school districts, both large and small, to improve the quality of their educational programs through the provision of needed programs and services to both.

Provide a Needed Change Agent in Education

Another major benefit which can result from the establishment of multi-county regional educational service agencies relates to organizational theory. A state school system is in need of a unit which is free from the inhibiting restrictions which accompany an organization with narrow focus, a unit which is free from the inadequacies of finance, personnel, and time, and free from the encumbrances of custom which impede innovative effort.

So, too, is education in desperate need of a structured, systematic vehicle to implement change. This will require, among other things, a planned means whereby an organizational unit in the state system of education is in both a strategic position and is capable of assessing and evaluating developments in all sectors of society, and, at the same time, is flexible enough to adapt its program to needed change. Local school district officials, by the very nature of the organization they administer, must devote a disproportionate amount of time and energy to "maintaining the organization." The state education agency tends to be similarly restricted. It appears that the multi-county regional educational service agency has the necessary organizational features to play a significant role in promoting change in the state system of education.

The limited research on innovation in education which has been conducted has not yet established all of the conditions necessary for the stimulation of change. More is known, however, about the elements in an educational institution

which tend to inhibit change. These elements include traditionalism, accepting the *status quo,* educational bureaucracy, insufficient financial resources, insufficient number and quality of personnel, insufficient time, and community apathy or resistance.

It cannot be guaranteed that the multi-county regional educational service agency can overcome these elements and serve successfully as a needed change agent. However, it appears that the structural characteristics of these units as envisioned in this report can do much to minimize many of the elements which are known to inhibit change.

Promote the Restructuring of School Government Consistent With Developments in the Public and Private Sectors

Educational concerns do not exist in a vacuum. Thus, they must reflect developments in other areas of human activity. Since education is dependent upon public support and understanding and since it serves a common clientele with other public and private agencies, it is important that the restructuring of school government be consistent with discernible trends in the public and private sectors. Further, this is true because many problems of education are not confined to the classroom, the local school district, or even the region. They are affected by socio-economic and political developments in the state and nation as well.

A number of discernible trends in the public and private sectors are apparent which must be reflected in the reconfiguration of school government. Several of the more significant trends which relate to the restructuring of the middle echelon unit of school government are:

1. The area function concept which approaches economic planning and development and the solution of socio-economic problems on a regional basis. In Iowa, economists have developed the implementation of this concept around the state's major cities, advocating that economic planning and development be initiated around these core cities.

2. Sociologists in Iowa are similarly advocating that the provision of many social and health services be carried out utilizing the same center-city concept. A number of the state's governmental, social, health, and mental health agencies have redesigned their state organizations, incorporating one or more features of the center-city concept. There is evidence of considerable public support for these developments.

3. In school government, the newly created area community college, area vocational-technical districts give recognition to the center-city concept. Further, the State Board of Public Instruction has also utilized area education districts in the development and implementation of state planning for Titles II, III, and VI of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.

4. Iowa, which has been considered largely a rural state, will have by 1980, according to nearly all population projections, over 50 per cent of its people concentrated in approximately ten standard metropolitan statistical areas.

5. In government generally, political scientists and public administrators have for many years advocated the broader approach to the provision of public services and the solution of governmental problems. This has taken a number of forms, among which are numerous proposals for the reorganization of county government to encompass a broader area in order to provide services more efficiently, effectively and economically. Consistent with this, Iowa now has permissive legislation allowing the creation of regional hospitals and penal institutions.

6. A number of federal programs, both within and outside of the Office of Education, encourage, and in many cases prescribe, that programs embrace the "area or regional concept." Examples of the latter include many conservation programs, flood control programs, mental health programs, highway improvement programs, metropolitan planning programs, and urban and rural planning programs.

7. Recent interest in intergovernmental relations on the federal-state, interstate, state-local, and inter-local levels is increasing. Legislation in many states, including Iowa, permits, and in fact, encourages joint planning by governmental subdivisions, joint exercise of governmental powers, and joint employment of personnel. This trend is based in

large part on the recognition that planning and implementation of programs which are in many cases directed toward identical services, purposes, and achievements, and that cooperation and coordination among and between governmental agencies is essential.

8. The increasing need for specialization is evident in many areas of society. Similarly increased specialization on the part of personnel in education is required, due to the growing complexity of educational tasks.

Improve the Coordination of Local, Regional, and Statewide Educational Planning

A final major benefit resulting from the establishment of multi-county regional educational service agencies is the improved coordination of educational planning on the local, regional, and statewide levels.

On the local plane, the regional agency can assist local school districts, through the provision of consultative and supportive services, in long-range planning and program development with the assurance that needed programs and services will be available on a consistent and continuous basis.

Regional educational planning can be facilitated through research and development, planning, and coordinative efforts by the regional educational service agency for the local school districts within its constituency. Further, the multi-county unit is in an ideal position to bring about cooperation and coordination with other governmental subdivisions and quasi-governmental agencies within a region principally because it is less restricted by existing political boundaries or other "artificial" constraints.

Multi-county regional educational service agencies will greatly assist statewide educational planning in that these units will provide the state educational agency with a small number of "local" agencies which can serve in a communicative capacity to the state agency because of their closeness to local school districts and their resulting awareness of need. Further, these agencies can serve in a coordinative capacity for the implementation of long-range statewide planning because of their consultative and supplementary service role to local school districts.